

Many consumers are concerned about animal testing in the cosmetics and toiletries industry and want to be sure that the products they buy have not caused animal suffering. Unfortunately, it is often extremely difficult to differentiate between companies that do and do not test on animals. Many companies do not label their products clearly and others make confusing statements when questioned about their policy on animal testing.

Considering the public opposition to animal testing, it is hardly surprising that companies still involved in this cruel practice are reluctant to provide clear and straightforward information on what they do. Despite the fact that many cosmetic and toiletry companies claim to have ended animal testing, it is still common practice. Many companies that label their products 'Not tested on animals' still use ingredients that they or their suppliers have tested on animals.

No company can claim that none of the ingredients it uses have ever been tested on animals, as even the most basic ingredients, such as water, have been animal tested in the past. There is, however, a real distinction between companies that continue to carry out or commission animal tests and those which have adopted a clear ethical policy not to be involved with animal testing in any way. Product labelling should enable consumers to know which company is which.

In order to help consumers choose the most ethical products, the BUAV and animal protection groups from around the world have developed the 'Humane Cosmetics Standard'. This is an international standard to indicate products which are genuinely cruelty-free. Companies which join the standard have to undertake that they will no longer conduct or commission animal tests; and will not purchase animal tested ingredients from suppliers after a fixed cut-off date. A list is provided of companies which meet the standard.

Any company that does not appear in the list is unlikely to meet the standard. This is regardless of what you may have been told by the companies directly, or by shop assistants selling cosmetics. Company statements on this controversial issue are

often carefully worded, and may need to be further examined...

#### **'We don't test our products on animals'**

Companies which do not conduct animal testing on finished products may still test ingredients on animals. Current European legislation requires that animal test data be submitted only for new ingredients. There are currently 8,000 ingredients already known to be safe through years of use, which companies could use to develop new, innovative products, until non-animal alternatives to all animal tests have been validated.

#### **'We don't test our products or ingredients on animals'**

Cosmetics companies often try to distance themselves from animal testing by having others conduct the testing for them. Tests may be conducted by parent companies, contract testing laboratories or ingredient suppliers. Any company that is serious about ending animal testing should make sure that its suppliers are not conducting animal tests on the ingredients they sell to them.

#### **'We comply with international safety requirements'**

No cosmetic company would knowingly compromise consumer safety, and it is misleading to suggest that safety can only be guaranteed through animal testing. At present, animal tests are only required to assess new ingredients, which have no known safety record. Companies that have abandoned animal testing meet the same safety requirements by using existing ingredients which are known to be safe.

#### **'We donate substantial funds to the development of alternative tests'**

All moves to develop alternative testing methods are welcomed by the BUAV, whether companies invest through donations to humane research charities or by establishing their own non-animal testing facilities. Unfortunately, however, some companies who claim to invest in non-animal alternatives are unwilling to prove their commitment

to ending animal testing by refusing to use new animal tested ingredients.

**'We support a ban on animal testing when alternative tests are available'**

Animal tests could be banned immediately, if cosmetic companies were willing to rely on the many thousands of ingredients already known to be safe, until non-animal alternative methods have been validated. Although there have been significant breakthroughs in the development of alternatives, investment is still relatively low.

**'None of our ingredients have been tested since the year X'**

Companies can limit the ingredients they use to those developed before a certain date, but this does not guarantee that their suppliers are not re-testing the ingredients that they sell to them. Regrettably, re-testing of existing ingredients is quite common, and for this reason, it is vital that companies check on their own suppliers. Companies should operate an effective monitoring system to ensure that their suppliers are complying with their policy on animal testing.

**The Humane Cosmetics Standard**

Although there are moves in Europe for a combined cosmetics "animal testing and sale ban", any legislation resulting from this is not destined to take effect for many years to come. The proposals are for an EU-wide cosmetics animal testing ban in 2009 and a two-part sales ban (first part 2009, second part 2013). This means that by 2013 we look set for an EU ban on the sale of new animal tested cosmetics, although the BUAV is concerned that a loop-hole in the proposals could allow the final part of the sale ban to be delayed even further.

As the effect of any EU testing or sales bans are not likely to be felt for many years, the immediate future of the animals used in cosmetic tests still rests in the hands of the cosmetics industry and the consumer. Consumers have real power to influence the companies they buy from, so if the manufacturers of your favourite cosmetic products have not yet adopted the standard, please write and ask them why.